United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

Major News Releases and Speeches

Dec. 18-Dec. 31, 1981

IN THIS ISSUE:

News Conference

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

The following are remarks by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block during a Dec. 31 interview in Washington. The subject is his reaction to the announcement of postponement of negotations on a new long-term grains agreement with the Soviet Union.

Q: Mr. Secretary, what is the meaning of the delay of the talks on a new long-term grains agreement with the Soviet Union?

A: The important consideration is that the negotiations have just been postponed. The climate right now is not the best and it's probably appropriate they be postponed. We have nine months before the current extension expires and if the situation were to improve we could go ahead and consumate an agreement. Anyone carefully reviewing the sanctions announced by the President can see some of the measures are very stern. As far as agriculture is concerned, the effects are minimal, practically nothing at all.

Q: What real effect is this delay going to have on the Soviet Union?

A: The truth is, as far as our agriculture trade with the Soviet Union, there should not be any immediate effect. We have nine months to go in the sixth year of our grains agreement. We've offered the Soviet Union 23 million tons of grain and to date they have purchased 10.9 million tons. So there's a great deal more grain that they can go ahead and buy in accordance with what we have offered, and, of course, they are still free to do so.

Q: Mr. Secretary, what role did you play in the action that has been taken?

A: In this particular case, I have been invited to serve as an active participant in the National Security Council meetings. The President felt that it's important as we consider the issues that I be there to serve as a resource person in terms of agriculture. If the NSC looks at anything that might affect agriculture, I am there and I can speak to the issues and, frankly, it gives me an opportunity to speak to the overall considerations as the President reviews his options.

Q: Mr. Secretary, if the United States and the Soviet Union do not meet to negotiate some kind of grain trade agreement beyond the

current extension, what will be the situation after September 30?

A: If this were the case we would revert back to the normal trading operation which is the kind of trading relationship we have with most countries in the world. They would be able to buy on our open market like any other country does.

#

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

PUBLIC OPINIONS SOUGHT ON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21—Public comments are needed to help update plans for the future management of the nation's natural resources, R. Max Peterson, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, said today.

Peterson said the public comments will be used in preparing the 1985 Resources Planning Act program, the third overall plan for the long range management of the 190-million-acre national forest system, as well as Forest Service research and cooperative assistance activities.

Public comments are being solicited on national goals for timber, range, water, wilderness, recreation, minerals and energy, fish and wildlife, rural communities and human resources, international forestry and resource protection.

"We are requesting that the public study a number of alternative goals and help us formulate one national goal for each of 10 resource opportunity areas," Peterson said.

"Just as in the 1980 program, public involvement will continue to be a key ingredient in the resources planning process. Every American benefits in some way from the management of our forest and rangelands, and we welcome their thoughts on how this important work should be conducted."

Peterson said the Resources Planning Act of 1974 requires the Forest Service to prepare an assessment of the nation's renewable natural resources every 10 years and a program for Forest Service activities every five years.

Peterson said the public comments on national goals are being sought through a publication called "Alternative Goals—1985 RPA Program." Copies are available from all Forest Service offices. The public comment period will end on March 15, 1982.

#

Food Marketing Alert: USDA PREDICTS PLENTIFUL SUPPLY OF WINTER FARE—FRUITS, FOWL AND MEATS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21—Holiday feasts needn't end in December, judging from predictions of January food supplies made by U.S. Department of Agriculture marketing specialists.

There'll be plenty of grapefruit, fresh winter pears, fresh apples, chicken, turkey, red meat and pork to bring in the new year.

The marketing specialists say turkey will be in record abundance, with supplies 18-22 percent greater than a year ago and 22-26 percent more than the 1979-81 average for January. Accounting for most of the supply increase are commercial cold storage holdings, which are estimated to be 35-40 percent more than last year. Average weekly production of turkey for January will likely average 1-5 percent below a year ago.

Production of broiler-fryers, pork and beef—though nearly the same or slightly less than last year—is sufficient to assure ample supplies. Beef supplies are expected to be near year-earlier levels, but about 2 percent above the 1979-81 average for the month. Predictions for pork show supplies averaging 4-6 percent below last year's record level, but about 4 percent above the average for the last three years. Broiler-fryer supplies will be at about the same level as last year and 2-4 percent above the 1979-81 average.

Marketing specialists also say supplies of fresh grapefruit during January and throughout the 1981-82 shipping season are expected to be plentiful.

Florida is expecting a record-breaking crop of 55 million boxes of grapefruit, 9 percent greater than last season's freeze-damaged crop. The Texas grapefruit crop is estimated at 11 million boxes, an increase of 57 percent over last season.

Markets also should have plenty of fresh winter pears. Though 5 percent less than last season's record crop of 244,000 tons, this season's estimated production of 231,000 tons is still quite large and should assure ample supplies throughout most of the winter pear shipping season.

This year's apple crop is smaller than last season, but fresh apples still will be plentiful.

Other products expected in the "plentiful" category include milk and dairy products, raisins, peanuts, spinach, rice and dry edible beans.

Supplies of eggs, fresh oranges, tangerines, tangelos, potatoes, onions, most processed vegetables, as well as canned noncitrus fruits and juices and citrus juices, will be sufficient to meet normal needs.

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USDA ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR CHEESE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today announced plans to implement President Reagan's authorization of the release of 30 million pounds of cheese to states for distribution to non-profit organizations for households in need.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service regional offices will respond to state requests for commodities through state distribution agents who customarily handle commodities for schools and institutions.

"The Food and Nutrition Service distribution network for commodity programs will be used to the maximum extent possible," Block said. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will ship the cheese in trucks or railroad car lots to central locations serving as delivery points.

Charitable, non-profit organizations, including food banks, will make the cheese available at the local level. Churches and other non-profit groups customarily operate food banks.

These groups will be eligible to participate in the cheese distribution program, if they have adequate storage facilities and record-keeping ability as determined by the states.

Additionally, under the farm bill signed today by President Reagan, the Food and Nutrition Service has authority to distribute cheese and other bonus dairy commodities, non-fat dry milk and butter, to the Title III elderly program and child care facilities.

#

USDA APPROVES KENTUCKY AND VIRGINIA AS FIRST STATES TO IMPORT CEM MARES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23—Kentucky and Virginia are the first states U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have approved to handle breeding age mares imported from countries affected by contagious equine metritis, a venereal disease of horses.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said Kentucky and Virginia state regulations meet federal requirements for quarantining, testing and treating mares from countries affected with the disease.

"Importers now have their first chance since the fall of 1977 to bring in breeding age mares from affected countries, such as Great Britain, Ireland and France," Atwell said. "Thanks to new USDA import procedures announced Oct. 16, we can import mares with confidence they are free of the disease."

Under the USDA procedures, a mare over 731 days old can be imported from a country affected with the disease only after she undergoes prescribed treatments there. If all tests are negative, she can be shipped to the United States for the normal port-of-entry quarantine and then consigned to a state designated by USDA to administer post-entry quarantine and additional precautionary treatments and tests.

"As designated states," Atwell said, "Kentucky and Virginia will hold imported mares in quarantine, provide precautionary treatment against the disease for five days and will then administer a series of three tests for the disease at least seven days apart. If all tests are negative, mares will then be released from quarantine."

Pregnant mares must remain under quarantine until they foal, then both mare and foal must pass negative tests for the disease.

"A critical part of the mare import procedure is surgically removing their clitoral sinuses and precautionary treating and testing before they're exported," Atwell said. "The clitoral sinuses are the areas where the contagious equine metritis bacteria are most likely to remain after clinical signs of the disease have disappeared. They're also the most difficult tissues to test and treat."

Contagious equine metritis is a venereal disease of horses. It directly infects only the mares. Stallions may be mechanical bacterial carriers;

however, thorough scrubbing and treating their genitalia renders them free of the disease.

USDA lists these countries affected with the disease: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Notice of this USDA action is scheduled to be published in the Dec. 24 Federal Register. Comments may be sent, until Feb. 22, to the deputy administrator for veterinary services, USDA, APHIS, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

#

USDA SETS USER FEE FOR TOBACCO INSPECTION AT AUCTION MARKETS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has set the user fee for mandatory inspection of tobacco at auction markets at the rate of $.45 per hundred pounds.

USDA had provided free tobacco inspection since 1935, but was required to charge for the service beginning Oct. 1 under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

The $.45 per hundred pound fee was proposed and public comments requested Sept. 9, according to J.T. Bunn, acting tobacco division director of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Of the 11 comments received, seven generally supported the proposal and four were opposed, he said.

The final rule amends regulations to increase appeals charges from $1 to $5 and establishes a committee of 14 people to advise USDA about inspection levels, services and fees.

Tobacco warehouse operators will collect the inspection fee and pay it to USDA. If the warehouse operator fails to collect or pay the fee, USDA will suspend inspection and related services, Bunn said.

Permissive USDA inspection—provided on request—will cost $17.80 per hour, $21.30 per hour for service outside the inspector's regular tour of duty and $26.70 an hour on holidays and Sundays. Permissive inspection of tobacco has been supported by fees since the 1935 Tobacco Inspection Act was enacted. Permissive inspection

usually takes place at processing plants where tobacco is redried for storage.

Membership on the new committee—the National Advisory Committee for Inspection Services—will include representatives from all the tobacco-producing areas, Bunn said.

Recommendations for membership will be solicited from farm bureaus in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin, as well as from the North Carolina Grange. One "at-large" member will also be selected from the Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri or West Virginia Farm Bureaus.

The final rule is scheduled to be published in the Dec. 24 Federal Register.

#

USDA WITHHOLDS FUNDING RECOMMENDATION FOR REGIONAL VETERINARY SCHOOL

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said today that current budget constraints make it impossible for him to recommend federal assistance for the construction of a veterinary school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The need for the proposed Old West Regional College of Veterinary Medicine was determined by a U.S. Department of Agriculture study team. USDA funding had been requested by the region under the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, which permits federal assistance for the construction of veterinary schools, providing states contribute matching funds.

"We all have special projects that we would like to see funded," Block said. "Many are valid requests, as this report clearly shows. But right now our top priority is the national economy."

The Old West region, which includes Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming, is a major livestock-producing area. It contributes 11.2 percent of the nation's total cash receipts for livestock and related products. It also has 14.8 percent of the cattle, 10 percent of the swine and 22.6 percent of the stock sheep.

National needs for large-animal veterinarians appear to be met through the 80's, but the Old West region may continue to be underserved, according to the report.

The region now has no complete program of veterinary medical education.

A regional college would help assure sufficient large-animal veterinarians because students tend to accept opportunities to practice in the state or region where they receive their training.

The study team, which included representatives of USDA and veterinary schools and associations, found the demand for veterinary education opportunities strong and competition keen.

"For the 1980/81 school year, 7,286 qualified students applied for 2,296 openings in the 27 U.S. veterinary schools," the report said. In that year, 143 students from the Old West Region applied for admission to existing veterinary colleges and 70 were admitted.

"The proposed program of the Old West Regional Veterinary School should be developed to enhance research, postdoctoral and graduate education, extension, and diagnostic and referral services important to the region's livestock industries," the report said.

#

U.S. RAISES SUGAR IMPORT CHARGES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23—In a move aimed at protecting the domestic sugar price support program, the United States today raised its import fees and duties on raw sugar by 2.8 cents per pound, to a total of 4.9543 cents, effective immediately.

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said the increase, mandated by two separate presidential proclamations, signed today, are necessary to implement the support program for sugar cane and sugar beets. This program involves a government sugar purchase price of 16.75 cents per pound.

One presidential proclamation raises the basic import duty on raw sugar from the current level of 0.625 cents a pound to 2.8125 cents, the maximum permitted by law.

The second proclamation makes temporary changes in the import fee system, resulting in an increase in the fees to 2.1418 cents per pound on raw sugar and 3.1104 cents on refined sugar. Current fees are 1.531 cents and 2.051 cents, respectively.

The sugar price support program became effective Dec. 22 when President Reagan signed the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

With world sugar prices currently about 13 cents per pound, Block said, increased import fees and duties are necessary to keep the price of imported sugar in harmony with the levels mandated by the legislation and to prevent large government sugar purchases. The United States imports almost 50 percent of its sugar requirements.

The principal change in the fee system updates the market stabilization price from 15 cents a pound, established in 1978, to 19.08 cents. Other factors in the fee calculation also were changed. Fees will continue to be adjusted quarterly in response to changes in world prices. They may also be adjusted more frequently if sudden significant changes in world prices occur. Fees may not exceed 50 percent of the ad valorem value of the imported sugar.

The changes in the fee system were made under the authority of Section 22 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. As provided by the act, the president has asked the International Trade Commission to investigate the need for a fee increase. Final action on the fee system will be taken on basis of the commission's findings and report.

The level of protection is that which is necessary to maintain domestic sugar prices at levels sufficient to induce domestic processors to sell sugar in the market rather than to the CCC, Block said. The market stabilization price of 19.08 cents per pound consists of the 16.75 cents purchase price, plus 2.33 cents to cover adjusted average freight costs of raw sugar, related marketing costs and other factors.

The new system replaces the system of quarterly fee adjustments established by Presidential Proclamation 4631 of Dec. 28, 1978.

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1982 MEAT IMPORTS ESTIMATED TO BE BELOW QUOTA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block announced today that U.S. meat imports for 1982 are estimated below

the level that would require restraints on imports under the Meat Import Act of 1979.

Based on estimates of available supplies, imports of beef and certain other meats should total not more than 1,210 million pounds—90 million pounds below the 1982 trigger point of 1,300 million pounds.

The Meat Import Act requires the president to restrict imports of certain meats—primarily beef and veal—if USDA estimates imports of those meats will equal or exceed 110 percent of a stated level.

"Based on today's estimate, there is no need to impose import restrictions during the quarter beginning Jan. 1," Block said. "Our analysis of conditions in this country and abroad affecting meat imports strongly suggests there will be no need for import restrictions for the remainder of the year."

USDA makes a new estimate of meat imports before each calendar quarter. Subsequent estimates will be made in March, June, and September and announced on or before the first day of each succeeding month.

No import restrictions on meat imports were imposed during 1980 or 1981. The fourth quarterly estimate of meat imports for 1981 was announced at 1,235 million pounds. Final data on actual imports should be available soon.

Imports of meat subject to the law—by month—are shown below:

	1978	1979	1980	1981
		million pounds		
January	79.2	120.9	144.3	79.5
February	100.3	134.2	107.0	109.2
March	150.8	151.5	97.1	90.6
April	132.6	142.4	101.9	107.6
May	140.9	144.6	105.0	81.9
June	105.7	139.4	99.5	98.1
July	105.2	120.7	146.0	112.2
August	104.9	104.9	123.4	102.1
September	132.5	84.8	100.5	114.1

(Table continued from previous page)

	1978	1979	1980	1981
		million pounds		
October	115.7	122.8	132.4	122.7
November	231.4	132.0	104.6	
December	86.1	155.9	169.3	
Total[1]	1,485.5	1,553.8	1,431.0	

[1]Totals may not add due to rounding.

#

USDA PROPOSES CHANGE IN BEEF AND CATTLE GRADE STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a proposal to revise the official U.S. standards for grades of carcass beef and for slaughter cattle and scheduled five public hearings on the proposal.

John Ford, deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for marketing and insepction services, said the proposed changes should allow leaner beef to qualify for Prime and Choice grades but not significantly lower the palatability of either grade. Beef in the Good grade would be leaner with lowered palatability.

The public hearings will be held during February in Utah, Georgia, Washington, D.C., Iowa and Texas.

The proposal is a result of latest research findings and of petitions for change that USDA has received in recent months, Ford said.

Ford said USDA officials have reviewed all available research data and information to evaluate the effectiveness of the present beef standards and to explore possible alternatives. The review, he said, indicated that some modifications of the beef grade standards may be needed.

USDA's proposal provides:

— That the minimum marbling requirements for the Prime, Choice and Good grades in "A maturity"—cattle up to approximately 30

months of age—would be reduced to "minimum moderate," "typical slight" and "minimum traces," respectively;

— That all young beef not meeting minimum requirements for the Good grade would be graded Utility;

— That the Standard grade would be eliminated;

— That the rate of increase in marbling requirements in "B maturity"—cattle about 30 to 42 months of age—would be doubled; that the marbling to maturity relationship be increased from 1:1 to 2:1;

— That quality grade requirements for bullock beef also would be changed so they would still be the same as those for steer, heifer and cow beef in "A maturity." Bullock beef would still be identified for class.

— That the related standards for grades of slaughter cattle would be changed to reflect changes made for grades of carcass beef; and

— That no changes would be made in yield grade standards.

Marbling is the amount of fat dispersed through a piece of meat and is one of the factors considered to contribute to the tenderness, juiciness and flavor of beef, Ford said.

USDA invites either oral or written comments on the proposal and data to support the comments, Ford said.

Public hearings, each starting at 9 a.m., local time, will be held:

— Feb. 9 in Salt Lake City, Utah, at Wright Center, Airport Hilton Inn, 5151 Wiley Post Way;

— Feb. 11 in Atlanta, Ga., at L.D. Strom Auditorium, Lower Plaza Level, R.B. Russell Federal Building, 75 Spring St., S.W.;

— Feb. 16 in Washington, D.C., at Jefferson Auditorium, South Agriculture Bldg., 14th and Independence Ave., S.W.;

— Feb. 22 in Des Moines, Iowa, at Henry A. Wallace Bldg. Auditorium, East 9th St. and Grand Ave.; and

— Feb. 25 in Dallas, Texas, at Dunfey Dallas Hotel, 3800 W. Northwest Highway.

Persons who want to testify at the hearings should notify the administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250 before Feb. 1.

Written comments should be submitted by March 31 to the Livestock, Meat, Grain, and Seed Division, AMS 2M-Annex, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250.

The proposal is scheduled to be published in the Dec. 30 Federal Register.

#

NEW HOUSING REGULATIONS AIMED AT PROVIDING MORE HOME LOANS AT USDA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has changed its regulations to make it possible for more people to get single-family home loans through USDA's Farmers Home Administration.

Charles W. Shuman, administrator of the USDA rural credit agency, said the revised rules change the income eligibility criteria, permit funds for approved solar heating, and make numerous changes to clarify and simplify operation of the agency's single-family housing programs.

The Farmers Home Administration has a wide range of housing programs, including mortgage loans for single-family homes, housing repair and rehabilitation loans, rural rental housing, farm labor housing and self-help housing loans.

Before the new regulations were implemented, they were reviewed and revised extensively, Shuman said.

One of the major changes is the elimination of a single, nationwide income eligibility level. Previously, only families with incomes below $15,600 were considered eligible for Farmers Home housing loans, except in Alaska and Hawaii.

Income ceilings now vary by economic areas and are based on a percentage of the area median income. Low income is defined as 8O percent of the area median income.

Applicants who qualify for moderate-income loans will pay interest rates prevailing when the loan is closed. The current interest rate charged by Farmers Home is 13.25 percent.

For those with incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income level, the agency provides "interest credits," which reduce the amount of interest the borrower pays, sometimes to as low as one percent.

Using data developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Farmers Home Administration now sets income

eligibility limits in more than 500 economic areas throughout the nation.

Income eligibility ranges from $17,000 in some of the nation's poorer counties to $23,500 in the more affluent areas, and up to $33,000 in Alaska. Low-income levels at which applicants become eligible for "interest credits" range from $11,500 to $18,000.

In addition, the new regulations identify "very-low income" levels as 50 percent of the area median income and stipulate that 30 percent of housing loans be made to borrowers in those categories, to the extent practical.

Other changes include:

—simplified loan information, instructions and procedures to make it easier for eligible borrowers to understand FmHA loan programs.

—interest rates charged on loans to moderate-income borrowers may be either Farmers Home's established rate or Housing and Urban Development's rate, depending on the borrower's ability to pay.

—priority will be given to applications to refinance debts and subsequent loans necessary for servicing actions. Generally, loans will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, but priority will be given in cases that will prevent loss of a home.

—elimination of the five-year limitation before Farmers Home has authority to refinance home loans made by commercial lenders when eligible applicants are delinquent for reasons beyond their control and threatened by foreclosure.

—size of allowable living area in new homes reduced to 1,200 square feet from 1,300 square feet.

—stipulates certain unusual, recurring expenses which may be deducted from income in determining eligibility.

The regulations are being published as a final rule, Shuman said, but the agency is accepting comments and will consider them in making future revisions in the operation of the housing program.

The agency operates a nationwide program of housing, farm, and community facility loans through 2,000 county offices, 300 district offices and a national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

More details are available in the Dec. 21 Federal Register.

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USDA ANNOUNCES CCC AND GRAIN WAREHOUSES TO SPLIT FEDERAL INSPECTION FEE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30—Operators of about 1,800 grain warehouses and the Commodity Credit Corporation will split the costs of inspecting the storage facilities and the condition of the commodities stored there under terms of an agreement announced today by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

"Under the agreement, our Commodity Credit Corporation will pay about half the costs of examining those warehouses that are licensed under the U.S. Warehouse Act and that have grain and rice storage contracts with CCC," Block said. "The warehouse operators will pay the other half of the fee.

"CCC has a financial interest in seeing that the grain is safely stored," Block said. "They own some of the grain outright and hold warehouse receipts as loan collateral on other stored grain."

Warehouse user fees are required under provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Two U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies are involved in the agreement—the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

The agreement allows the AMS Warehouse Division to begin collecting user fees for its examinations, retroactive to Oct. 1—the date when user fees were instituted under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Agricultural Marketing Service inspectors periodically check warehouses to determine the condition of stored commodities and the condition under which they are stored.

A September proposal would have required all licensed grain warehouses to pay the entire cost of federal examinations.

Negotiable receipts issued to farmers for their products stored in licensed warehouses are of real value. The receipts may be bought, sold or used at CCC and financial institutions to obtain credit.

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EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE FOUND IN PARROTS IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30—U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians have confirmed an outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease—a highly contagious and destructive disease of poultry and other birds—in parrots in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The owner of a Colorado Springs pet shop—Bird Paradise—obtained a double yellow-headed Amazon parrot Dec. 5 after answering a newspaper advertisement, according to John Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Soon after he obtained the parrot, the pet shop owner notified Colorado officials he feared the parrot might have entered the United States illegally.

On Dec. 9, U.S. Customs seized the parrot from the pet shop and seized seven more double yellow-headed Amazon parrots at the home of Meghan Christiansen in Colorado Springs.

USDA veterinarians collected laboratory specimens from all eight of these parrots and sent them to USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories, Ames, Iowa. In addition, USDA collected specimens from a parrot and a canary that had died at the pet shop. Specimens from both groups tested positive for exotic Newcastle disease.

"We have reason to believe the double yellow-headed Amazon parrots were transported from Monterey Park, Calif., to Colorado Springs and that they had been smuggled into California from Mexico," Atwell said. "We also must trace 14 sales of birds from the pet shop to prevent further spread of the disease."

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INTEREST RATE TO BE LOWERED ON FACILITY, WATER, WASTE LOANS AT USDA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30—Beginning Jan. 1, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will lower the interest rate it charges for community facility and water and waste disposal loans from 12.25 percent to 11.375 percent.

Charles W. Shuman, administrator of Farmers Home Administration, the USDA rural credit agency that handles the loans, said the new rate reflects a general decline in interest rates.

Shuman said community facility and water and waste disposal rates are calculated quarterly, based on the current average cost of municipal bonds. The old rate had been in effect since Oct. 1.

Other FmHA loan rates are not affected by this change.

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USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR NOVEMBER

WASHINGTON, Dec. 31—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released its monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for November 1981.

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost and liberal.

Betty Peterkin, a home economist with the Human Nutrition Information Service, said the plans consist of foods that together provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and fixed at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Peterkin said. "Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes and how much food is prepared at home.

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," she said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families with less money for food. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

Details of the four food plans are described in Home and Garden Bulletin No. 94, "Family Food Budgeting. . .for Good Meals and Good Nutrition," which may be purchased for $1.50 each from the

Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN NOVEMBER 1981

	Plans			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-54 years)	$32.90	$42.30	$53.10	$63.50
Family of 2 (55 years and over	29.60	37.80	46.90	55.80
Family of 4 with preschool children	46.70	59.60	74.30	88.70
Family of 4 with elementary school children	56.50	72.00	90.40	107.90
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	7.60	9.60	11.80	14.00
3-5 years	9.20	11.50	14.20	17.00
6-8 years	11.80	14.90	18.70	22.30
9-11 years	14.80	18.60	23.40	27.90
Females:				
12-19 years	13.90	17.70	21.80	26.00
20-54 years	13.40	17.20	21.40	25.50
55 and over	12.20	15.60	19.20	22.70
Males:				
12-14 years	15.70	19.80	24.70	29.50
15-19 years	17.20	21.80	27.30	32.70
20-54 years	16.50	21.30	26.90	32.20
55 and over	14.70	18.80	23.40	28.00

To estimate your family food costs

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person

eating lunch out five days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a family of five or six persons, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

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